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State Superintendent

DPI VISTA Monthly

May 2006

So often the problem is in the system, not in the people. If you put good people in bad systems, you get bad results. You have to water the flowers you want to grow.

-Stephen R. Covey



Jane Grinde
Project Director
Kari Nelson
Program Assistant
Stephanie Hogue
VISTA Leader
Megan O'Connell
DPI VISTA

Online newsletters: <http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/vnwsltrhm.html>

May is sure to be the month of the beginning of the end. With school about to end, many of you will be running around trying to do some last events before June.

May is also the month of the VISTArt Showcase, which will be held from May 24-27th. The reception will be held on May 27th from 6-8pm in Madison at the Common Wealth Gallery located at 100 S. Baldwin St.

I encourage all of you to attend or try to. Many of your fellow VISTAs have art in the show and your fellow VISTA (Megan) is hosting it! So come and enjoy the art, the people, the food, and the music. For many of us our year of service is coming to an end and this may be one of the last chances available to see your VISTA pals.

Have a great month and take the time to enjoy the good things!



Updated Interview Schedule

June: Karen Collins and Krista Larson

July: Kathryn Zboralski and Lisa Fusco

Sites to See

Got Dirt?

Learn about this gardening initiative and toolkit by visiting:

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/gotdirt.htm>

Homework Help

This site has links for school subjects so kids can get help with their studies.

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/>

New in Homework Help

This new site offers lots of great help with homework. They offer a 30 day free trial, but after that you have to pay.

<http://www.Cosmeo.com>

Volunteer 101

This site is great and all about volunteering!

<http://www.fsu.edu/%7Evolutee/index2.html>

Available Grants

Louis R. Cappelli Foundation Offers Support for Programs Serving At-Risk Youth

The [Louis R. Cappelli Foundation](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=139400047) is a funding source designed to assist at-risk youth to reach their full potential. Three specific targeted areas where the foundation focuses its attention are education, health and fitness, and arts education.

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=139400047

Macy's North Announces Annual Community Grant Program

Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations that benefit children and families in three areas: education, arts and culture, and health and welfare.

Deadline: May 31, 2006

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=137200055

Youth Garden Grant Program

The [National Gardening Association](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=139400051) and [Home Depot](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=139400051) have announced the 24th annual Youth Garden Grant Program. Schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, treatment facilities, and intergenerational groups throughout the United States are eligible to apply. Deadline: November 1, 2006

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=139400051



Seasonal Events

1 - 31 Door County — Festival of Blossoms.

Thousands of acres of cherry and apple blossoms, millions of daffodils and tulips, and countless wildflowers in the meadows. Experience the lighthouse walk, shipyard tours, garden and wildflower hikes and artist's open studios and galleries. For more information call (800) 527-3529.

2 - 3 La Crosse - The Care Bears Live. Showtimes: Tuesday May 2nd at 7pm, Wednesday May 3 at 10:30 am & 7pm. La Crosse Center. For more information call (608) 789-7400.

5 - 7 Oshkosh - African Violet Show. Annual judged African Violet show with about 100 exhibits. African violets and companion plants available for purchase. St. Josaphat's Church. For more information call (920) 426-3764.

20 Baraboo - Faire On The Square. 200 Art/Craft Vendors, Live Music, Food Court, Farm Market, Baraboo National Bank Magic Circus Stage Show(10,12 & 3pm),Fun Time Inflatables, Creation Station Kid's Crafts, Face painting, balloon artistry & more! Downtown Baraboo. Event starts at 9:00AM and ends at 4:00PM. For more information call (608) 356-7995.

20 Oshkosh - Festival of Spring. The festivities include a plant sale, garden and landscape vendors, tasty food, entertainment and the chance to find the perfect inspirational item for your garden. Paine Art Center and Gardens. For more information call (920) 235-6903.

May 26 - Jun 18 Milwaukee - Man of La Mancha.

Since it opened on Broadway in 1966, Man of La Mancha has gone on to become one of the great musical classics of the modern theatre. Set during the Spanish Inquisition, this extraordinary blend of tragedy, romance, comedy, adventure and glorious music tells the epic tale of knight errant Don Quixote, a simple man struggling to make the world a better place for everyone. Broadway Theatre Center. For more information call (414) 291-7800.

Money Saving Tip of the Month

For all you grocery shopping fans out there (and I hope that's everyone) always go to the store with a list. A list is a great guide to help you purchase only the necessary items. It can help you avoid those temptation isles. And what you don't know about, you can't buy.

Shop the perimeter of the store. This area has the freshest, healthiest products, so you should be mainly shopping around here anyway. We didn't want the Cheetos on sale 2 for \$5 anyway, did we?

Don't go to the store hungry — unless, of course, there are free samples. If you are hungry and shop, you'll tend to buy more and it'll probably be junk anyway. So don't do it!

Remember to go through the sales sheet before you shop. This way you can make your list based on the sales and can write down what exactly is on sale. Writing Cheerios isn't good enough when it's only the 10 oz. box that is on sale and you pick up the 16 oz. You most likely won't put it back when you get to the front of the line. Also, it's good to make sure you know what is on sale because the store might not have it in their system. Then it's up to you to tell them about their mistake. Copps is great for refunding you more than the difference. Cub only gives the difference.

Also, bring your own bags if you shop at Copps or other stores that pay you to bring your own bags. They give you five cents back for every bag of your own you bring. You laugh now, but if you bring 8 bags and shop every week, you will save \$20 a year.

Make your own meals because even if you spend a lot at the grocery store, you'd pay a whole lot more at a restaurant.

Action Team Corner: Spring a Good Time to Look Back and Ahead

This monthly column attempts to answer questions and offer ideas for starting and growing a successful Partnership Action Team.

Successful school, family, and community partnership programs require thoughtful, ongoing planning and implementation all year long. Spring is a wonderful time for Partnership Action Teams to evaluate programs and practices that occurred during the preceding school year. It's also a great time to look ahead and plan new or ongoing activities for the next school year.

Following, are some ideas recommended by the National Network of Partnership Schools that VISTAs can do with their Action Teams each spring to help sustain successful partnerships:

1. Hold an End-of-the-Year Celebration to thank, recognize, and reward those who lead, support and participate in partnership activities. Be sure to recognize the partnership achievements gained during the year.
2. With your Action Team, complete an End-of-Year Evaluation, contained in the Network's handbook, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action (Second Edition)*. Choose the form aligned by types of partnerships (pp. 353-359) or the form aligned by partnership goals (pp. 360-364).
3. Complete and return the Network's *UPDATE* survey to renew membership for the next school year. NNPS waives annual renewal fees of \$100 per school if the *UPDATE* is returned by June 30. Download a survey form from www.partnershipschools.org.
4. Select replacements for outgoing members of the Partnership Action Team for next year.
5. Select a date and place to conduct team training before the school year ends, during the summer or in the fall to prepare new Action Team members and refresh continuing members.
6. Revise the Three-Year Outline (p. 339) by adding or adjusting goals and activities for the next three years.
7. With the Action Team, write a new One-Year Action Plan for the upcoming school year.
8. Ask the Action Team to develop summer partnership activities that connect families to children's learning and keep family-school communications open and positive.





Recipe of the Month

Lemon Torte with Raspberries

- 1 pkg. 4-serving lemon Jell-O
- ½ c. boiling water
- 1/3 c. frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
- 1 12 oz. can evaporated skim milk
- 2 c. cubed angel food cake
- 2 c. fresh raspberries
- 1 T. sugar

1. In a large bowl dissolve lemon gelatin in the boiling water. Stir in thawed lemonade concentrate and evaporated skim milk. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 1 to 1-1/2 hours or until mixture mounds when spooned.
2. After chilling, beat gelatin mixture with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 5 to 6 minutes or until fluffy.
3. Arrange angel food cake cubes in bottom of 8 in sprayed springform pan. Pour gelatin mixture over cake cubes. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 4 to 24 hours or until firm.
4. Meanwhile, in a small bowl stir together raspberries and sugar. Cover and chill 2 to 24 hours.

To serve, cut torte into wedges and spoon raspberries on top. Makes 12 servings.

Books to Peruse

Whatever it Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn, by Richard DeFour, et al.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, by Paulo Friere, et al.

What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, by Robert J. Marzano

Interview with Julie McGonigal and Megan O'Connell

Julie is a VISTA at the Stars Center in Milwaukee and Megan is a VISTA at the DPI.

Megan's Questions for Julie

Q: So, as a Julie, how often are you referred to as Julia? Does this bother you? Sometimes, when I think of your name, it reminds me of Julia Goolia from the *Wedding Singer*. Does that happen to you ever?

A: I'm only occasionally referred to as Julia, and no it doesn't bother me. Usually it makes me feel like I should enunciate more. And yes, I often hear the "Julia Goolia" thing...it hasn't gotten old yet.

Q: I know you majored in creative writing, so what is your favorite story you have written? What's it all about.

A: I think my favorite story is about an elderly man who's recently become a widower, and is hosting Thanksgiving without his wife for the first time. I really like his character, and the characters of some of his family members.

Q: What are you reading now?

A: "Tooth and Claw," a book of short stories by T.C. Boyle. I heard him read a selection from it at the "L.A. Times Festival of Books" last year, and just got around to picking it up.

Q: Is there any food you think you could eat every day and be totally happy about doing so?

A: I eat peanut butter everyday. It's a super food. I prefer Peter Pan Reduced Fat. On average, I eat peanut butter at least twice a day.



Q: In creative writing class when you critiqued others' work, what is the worst thing you read? And in what level was it in? (Like intro, intermediate, advanced writing or however they did it at USC)

A: There was one story that pretty much stole its entire premise from a soap opera. Right down to the name of the town it was set in. It was in my Intro to Fiction class, and I'm pretty sure the girl later dropped the major.

Q: What is the best thing you have gotten to do as a VISTA?

A: I think the best part of being a VISTA is becoming part of a network of people who care about the world and want to get things done.

Q: What made you go to California for college? How did it compare to your mental image of going there?

A: I went because I did a summer program at USC in high school, and fell in love with the school. I also had always hoped to leave Illinois. In reality, college in Los Angeles had its good points and bad points, and in the end made me realize how much I love the Midwest.

Q: What is the first short story that comes to your mind right now? Why on earth did you think of that?

A: "Dogology", from "Tooth and Claw." I thought of it because I read it last night. Haha.

Q: If you could go back and start as a freshman in college all over again and know what you know now, would you do the same things?

A: Hmmmm...good question. I don't know if I'd want the opportunity to do it all again, because I think that every decision I made--even those I'm tempted to characterize as "bad ones"--has resulted in something positive.

Q: What was your first impression of me when we met at PSO? Has it changed?

A: I thought you were very nice but perhaps a little quiet. I was wrong — you're not quiet. You're also very funny and make excellent pound cake (among other things).

Julie's Questions for Megan

Q: Megan, we all know you like to cook. What is your signature dish or favorite thing to make?

A: With food the choice is always tough. I really like to make desserts though. Cookies, cakes, cheesecake — anything. I especially like to try to make new desserts. Sadly, not enough people are around to eat them, so I don't make them very often.

Q: If you could win an all-expense trip to any destination in the world, where would it be and why?

A: Oooh, that is hard! Because I have yet to really begin my travels, I still have everywhere to go. If I had to choose just one though, I might go with Greece right now. Although, I really want to visit Japan, too. Either one would be awesome.

Q: What was the worst thing you did to your sister growing up?

A: Oh my gosh, I wonder if I told you some story before or something? What a question. Hmm. I probably did a lot of not nice things to my sister. One time I accidentally shut her finger in the car door. It was an accident for real.

I let her cut all her toys' hair/fur off and her own hair and waited until she wanted to work on my toys before getting mom. That probably wasn't very nice. She had a bowl haircut for months and hated it.

Q: What is your least favorite household chore? Do you make your boyfriend help with chores around the house?

A: Cleaning the bathrooms or the kitchen tie for last. Not to mention laundry. I guess I hate them all.

I do make Riley help some. He is usually good about doing things without asking like clearing the dishes. Sometimes he will unload the dishwasher or help with laundry or take out the trash all by himself, which is sadly impressive.

Q: You have an interesting pet. Tell us a little about him.

A: Nigel P. Merryweather is a chinchilla. He has the softest fur that you can't get wet because it is so dense the water would stick and he'd probably get

pneumonia and die. He takes baths in dust which is pretty funny to watch because he just rolls around in it. They're from the mountains of South America and have just recently been brought over as pets. This isn't so great because they aren't so into people like cats or dogs. I guess it is like have a very soft hamster. He loves to chew on everything and is rather shy.

I often feel like I am bad parent to him because he is so disinterested in us. So if you know of a good person who really wants a chinchilla....

Q: If someone were traveling to your home state (North Carolina) where would you recommend they visit.

A: Choices, choices. Well, while in NC they would have to visit the Blue Ridge Mountains. Up there they'd have to see Asheville/Black Mountain. They are great little artsy towns with beautiful things. It's a bit expensive, but looking is free! Of course you'd have to see the Biltmore Estate. It is absolutely gorgeous with all the gardens and views. Lots of weddings up there. Plus they have a vineyard and wine tastings. The house itself is very impressive and one of the closest things America has to a castle. So that's a good tour.

Then you'd have to go the other direction and head to the Outer Banks. The Outer Banks are really neat and you can see stuff about planes and marine life. There is also a really big sand dune that you run down and while it may sound silly, it is actually really fun. Schools do that for field trips. And, of course, there is the water itself. It's so calming and beautiful you really can't beat it. That was a bit much and I totally skipped the piedmont!

Q: You like to write children's stories. Who is the best character you've come up with? What were some of your favorite books as a kid?

A: My best character has shown up in various forms in many of my works. I usually name her Abigail.

No matter her age she is always sassy, fun, and open to saying anything whether it is dumb, inappropriate, or terribly clever.

As a little kid I really liked The Lady with the Alligator Purse and The Velveteen Rabbit.

Q: You're new to Madison this year. What has been the best part about moving to a new city? What are your favorite things to do in Madison?

A: Moving to a new city is always exciting. I loved Chapel Hill, but I was tired of being there and wanted something new. So the change is great because there are all these new things to discover. Leaving friends is always sad, but making new ones is fabulous and I have been lucky to get a great best friend here that I do tons of stuff with here. I really like the grocery stores here, but that is not a good favorite. So my favorite thing in Madison is the Farmer's Market and the art on the square. I haven't gotten to do the Taste of Madison thing yet, but I'm sure I'll love it, too.

Q: Do you have any plans for when your term as a VISTA is up?

A: Do something interesting and enjoyable for the 10 months we will be here before we move to another new city.

Q: So, last but not least, I hear you have some interesting news. Care to share with us the exciting thing that happened to you on top of the St. Louis Arch?

A: Oooo! Riley finally proposed! So I am happily engaged after dating for four and a half years. I'm very excited and happy he did it at the Arch. I remember going up to the top as a child, so it brings back good memories.

